

RIDGEFIELD PUBLIC SAFETY FACILITIES SURVEY

*November 2025 Referendum Research Findings
& Communications Guidance*

April 2nd, 2026

*Research Conducted by
Surveys & Forecasts, LLC
Norwalk, CT
www.safllc.com*



BACKGROUND

In November 2025, a referendum on a Ridgefield's combined Emergency Services Command Center (\$77MM bond) was voted down, leaving the project without a clear path forward.

Surveys & Forecasts, LLC was commissioned to conduct a formal survey of registered voters to assess sentiment and identify concerns ahead of any future proposal.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- 1** Understand attitudes toward the November 2025 proposal and how they have evolved.
- 2** Measure registered voter support for a combined emergency services command center.
- 3** Identify the concerns driving opposition – cost, location, scope, and communication.
- 4** Assess which decision factors matter most to voters when considering a future referendum.
- 5** Profile key subgroups — by vote history, age, tenure, and income — to guide targeted communications.
- 6** Develop actionable guidance for positioning and messaging a revised proposal effectively.

SAMPLE UNIVERSE

- The sample was drawn from Ridgefield's civic notification system — a database of 8,637 residents who opted in to receive either general government or public safety announcements.
- After de-duplication, 3,584 invitations were sent in March 2026; 976 responses received (27%).
- The analysis was filtered down to 798 registered voters — the most relevant audience for any future proposal.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

- Invitations were sent via the Town's Administrative Office system. This email address is already whitelisted, and invitations are not considered spam. The survey length averaged four minutes to complete.
- Topics included: resident screening; registered voting status; prior vote behavior; intent if a new vote were taken; overall sentiment; open-ended rationale; attitudes (5 agreement statements); importance ratings (7 items); and residence tenure, age, and income.

ANALYSIS APPROACH

- **Data tabulations focused on key groups: those who previously supported vs. opposed; future vote intent; residential tenure; age; and income.**
- **Open-ended responses were coded into themes and sub-categories.**
- **All percentages reported here are vertical (column) percents.**

NOTES & LIMITATIONS

- **Respondents are part of the town's existing notification system. This introduces a self-selection component: respondents are, by definition, engaged residents who opted into municipal communications. This population is likely more aware of the proposal than the general Ridgefield electorate.**
- **However, this does not imply any inherent bias (pro or con) on the facilities issue.**
- **Results should be used to inform future decision-making vs. a pure projectable probability sample.**

The survey covered five areas across 13 questions.

01 Eligibility & Residency

- Registered voter status
- Own or rent primary residence
- Full-time vs. part-time residency

02 November 2025 Voting History

- Whether voted in Nov 2025
- How voted in Nov 2025

03 Current Position & Sentiment

- Vote intent if referendum were held today
- Overall sentiment towards proposal
- Open-ended: reasons for their position

04 Attitudinal Battery

- Facility condition adequacy
- Value of combined operations/public safety impact
- Property value impact/impact of a tax increase

05 Decision Factors

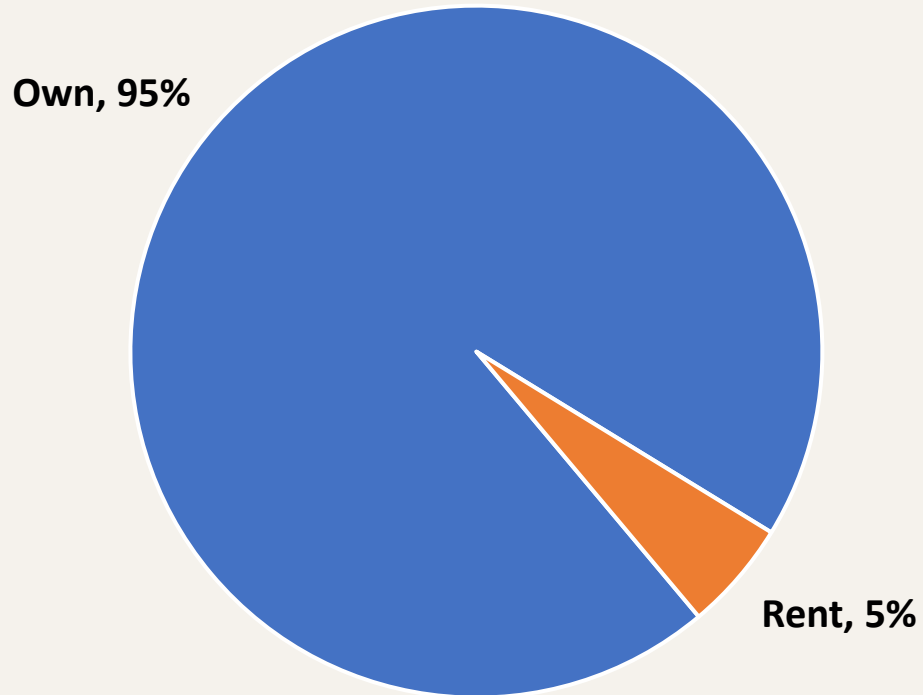
- Importance of total cost, site cost, personal tax impact, location, traffic, emergency coordination, response times

06 Profile Questions

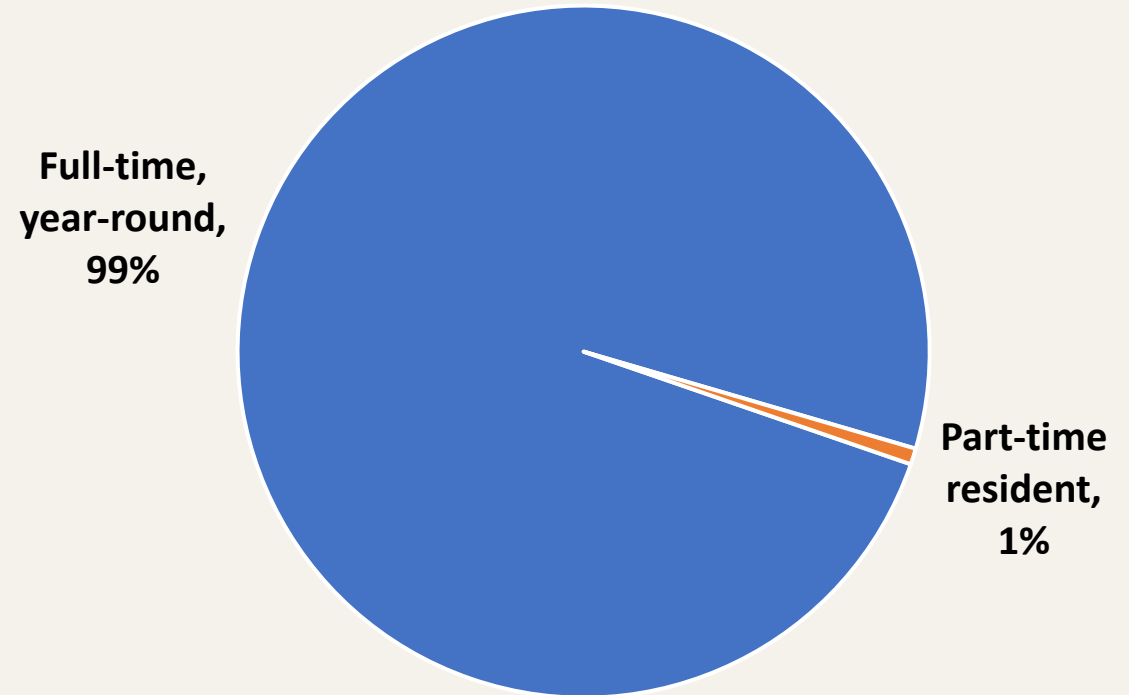
- Length of residency
- Age
- Household income

Our sample is dominated by homeowners who live in Ridgefield full-time.

Own vs. Rent



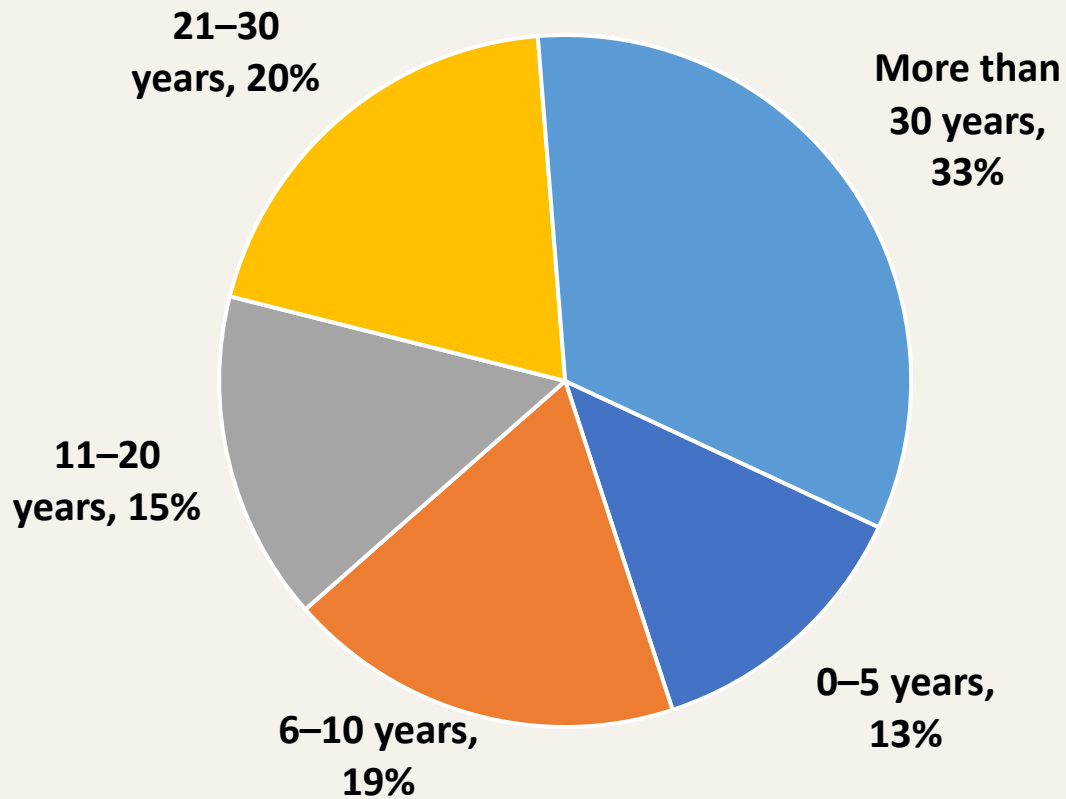
Live Full- or Part-time



Q2. Do you own or rent your primary residence in Ridgefield?
Q3. Do you live in Ridgefield full-time or part-time?

Residency skews to those in Ridgefield for 30+ years, and 45% of survey respondents have HH incomes above \$200K.

Years in Ridgefield



Household Income

	Total Sample (798)
Under \$100K (Net)	7%
<i>Under \$30,000</i>	1%
<i>\$30,000 to \$49,000</i>	1%
<i>\$50,000 to \$99,000</i>	6%
\$100K-\$199K (Net)	19%
<i>\$100,000 to \$149,999</i>	9%
<i>\$150,000 to \$199,999</i>	10%
\$200K-\$499K (Net)	35%
<i>\$200,000 to \$299,999</i>	18%
<i>\$300,000 to \$499,000</i>	17%
\$500,000 or more	10%
Prefer not to answer/don't know*	29%

Q11. How long have you lived in Ridgefield?

Q13. What category contains your household income?

* Tends to skew more to higher income brackets

SECTION 02 | SAMPLE VALIDATION: AGE DISTRIBUTION

Because this was a survey on the last referendum, we compared the survey age profile to the actual voter age profile, rather than to town census data.

Age Band	Survey Sample	Voter File
18–24	0.3%	2.5%
25–29	0.1%	1.8%
30–39	6.9%	7.8%
40–49	19.9%	17.5%
50–59	18.4%	20.6%
60–69	25.7%	24.8%
70–79	21.6%	17.1%
80+	7.1%	7.8%

Strong alignment across core age bands

The survey's 30+ age cohorts (representing the bulk of active voters) track closely to the Nov. 4, 2025 voter profile.

60–79 slightly over-represented

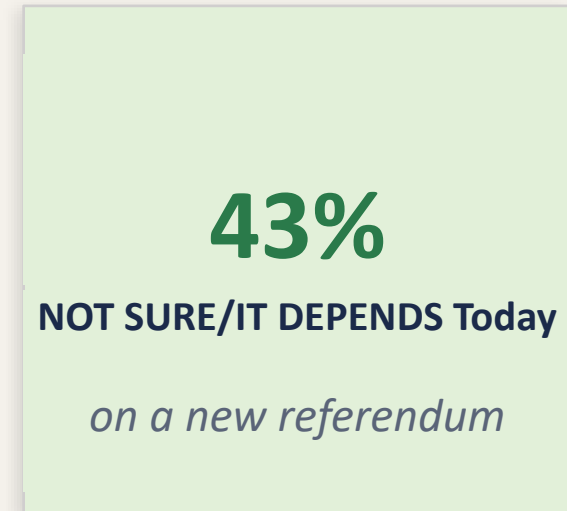
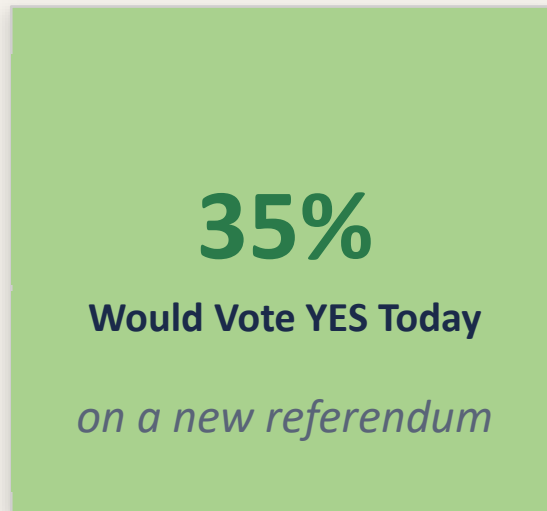
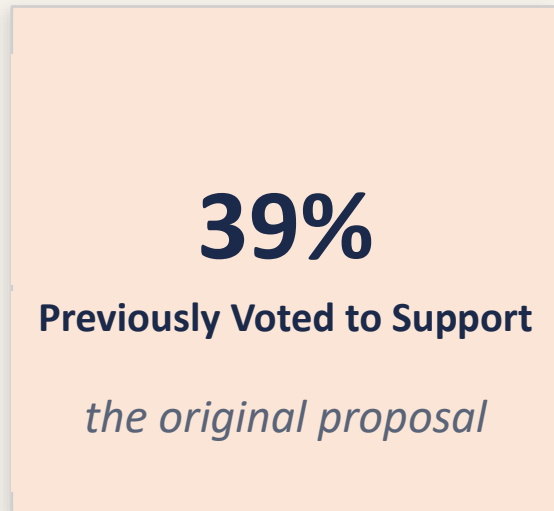
Survey is 47.3% vs. 41.9% in the voter file (+5.4 pts). These survey respondents may be more engaged on town issues and more impacted by town alerts.

18–29 slightly under-represented

Younger cohorts (0.4% in the survey vs. 4.3% in the voter file) may not have signed up for government/public safety alerts or be a head of household.

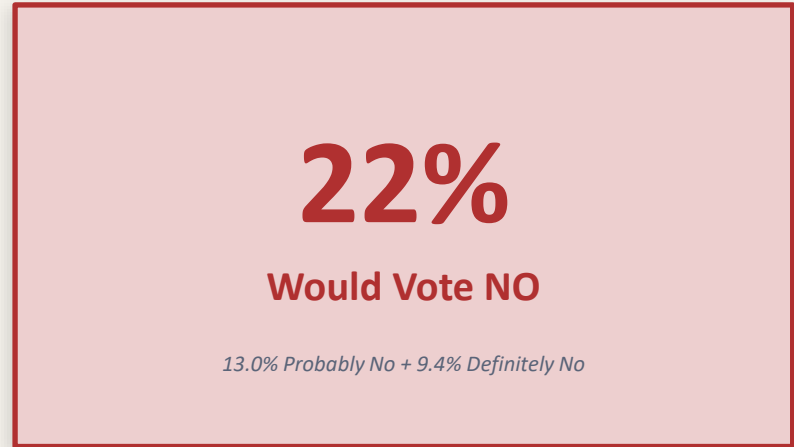
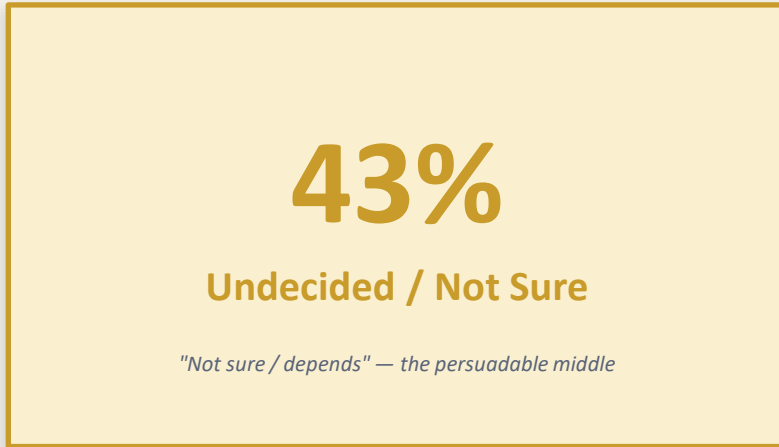
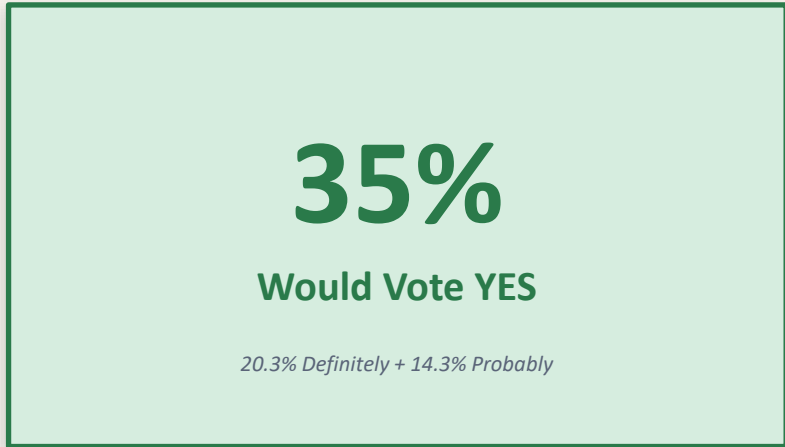
Sources: Ridgefield registered voter file (N=8,354); Ridgefield Public Safety Command Center Survey.

- In the referendum, 39% voted to support the original Nov 4th, 2025 proposal.
- Future voting intent from the survey is consistent at 35% (“Would definitely/probably vote yes”), with another 43% who are unsure.

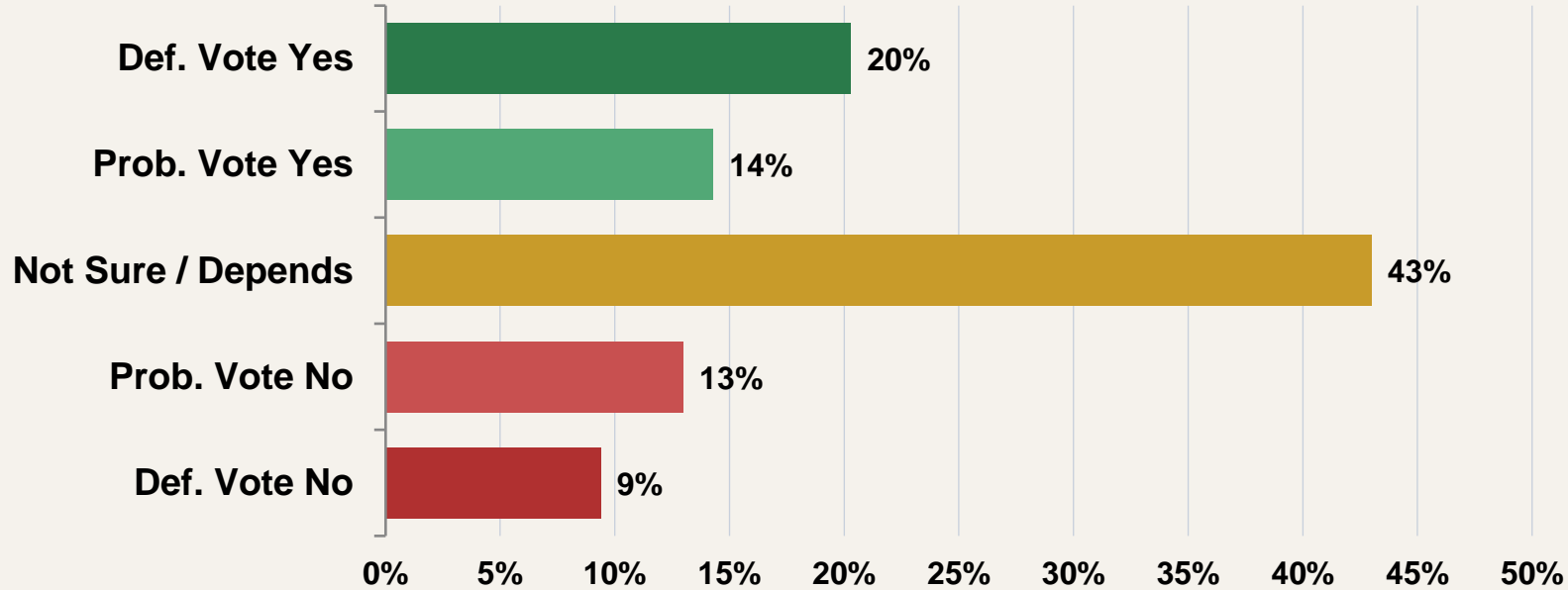


Q6. If a referendum were held today on a combined Public Safety Facility in Ridgefield, how would you vote?

Where Residents Stand Today



Q6 — If a referendum were held today, how would you vote?



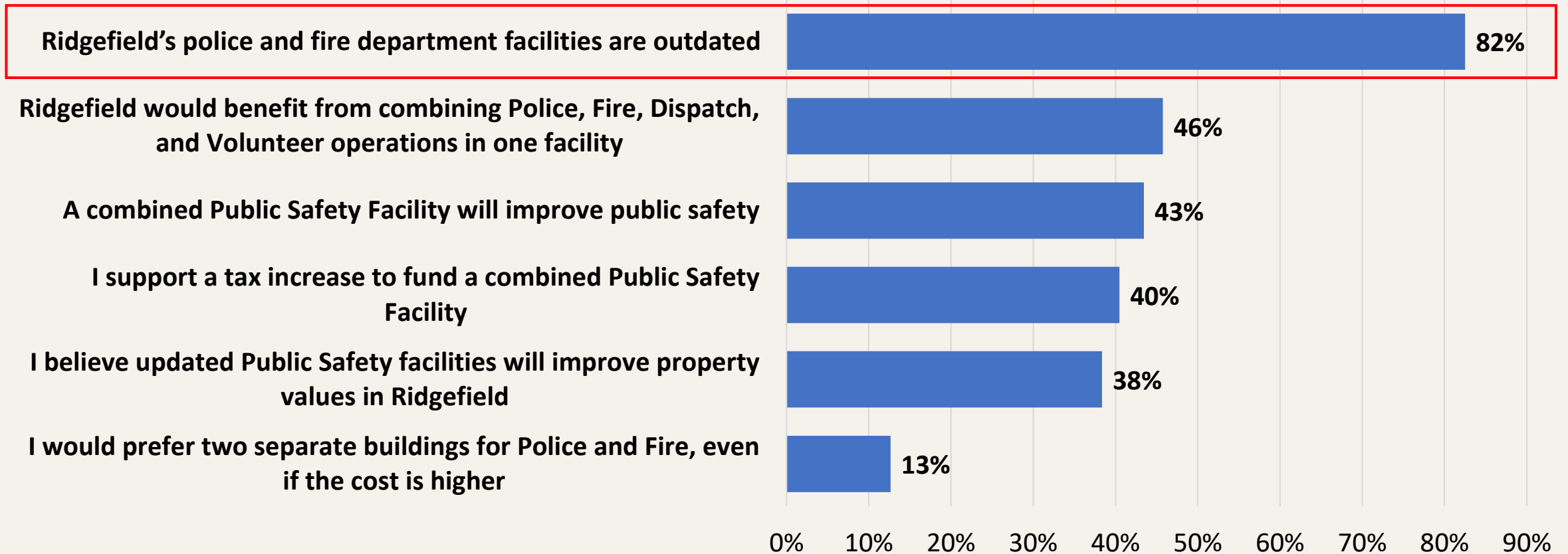
KEY FINDING

- The quest for new public safety facilities is not lost – it is simply not yet persuasive enough.
- With 22% firmly opposed and 43% still undecided, the path to approval runs through the middle.
- Voters aren't opposed — they're unconvinced. This is a persuasion problem, not a rejection problem.

SECTION 04 | ATTITUDES — % AGREE COMPLETELY/SOMEWHAT

While voters overwhelmingly recognize the need for updated facilities (82% “agree completely/somewhat”), support for the specific combined-building solution (and the tax increase to fund it) falls well short of a majority, hovering in the low-to-mid 40s.

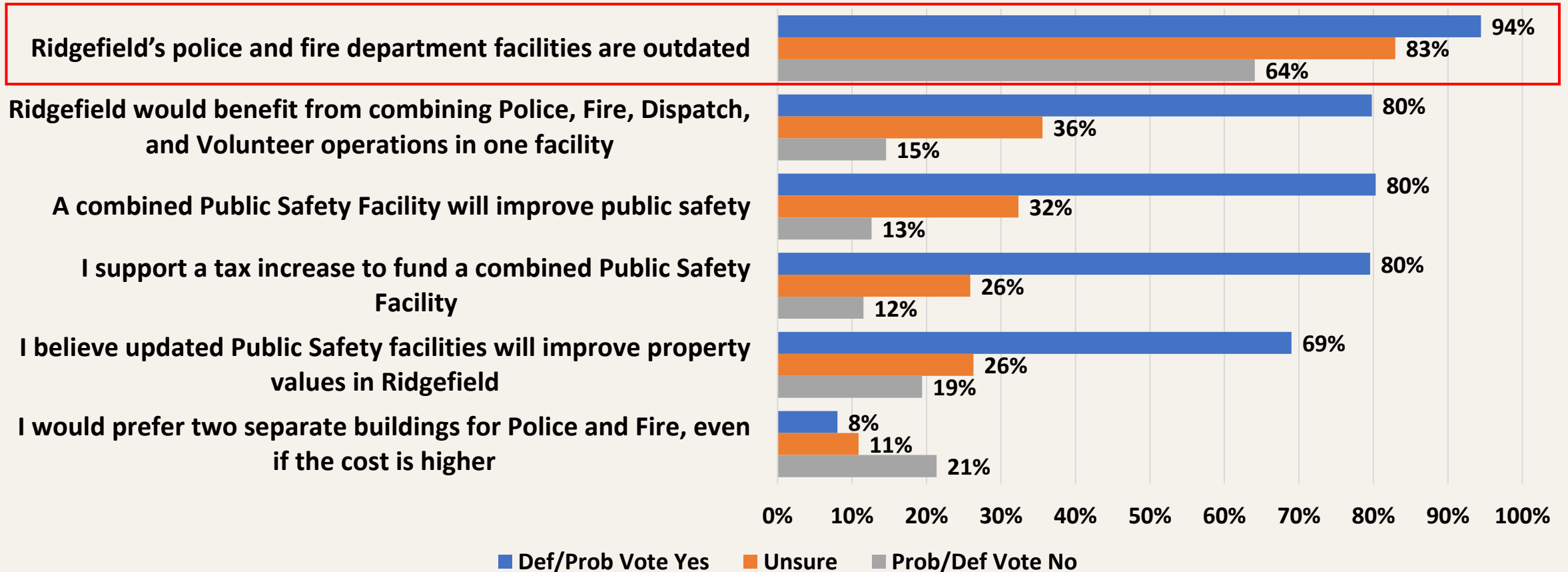
Total Sample



Q9. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement - % Agree Completely/Somewhat

SECTION 04 | ATTITUDES — % AGREE COMPLETELY/SOMEWHAT

Across all measures, likely “Yes” voters and “No” voters hold divergent views – but all recognize the need for updated facilities. However, future “Yes” voters see multiple benefits. The “Unsure” segment sees benefits yet unresolved cost concerns. No one prefers two buildings at higher cost.

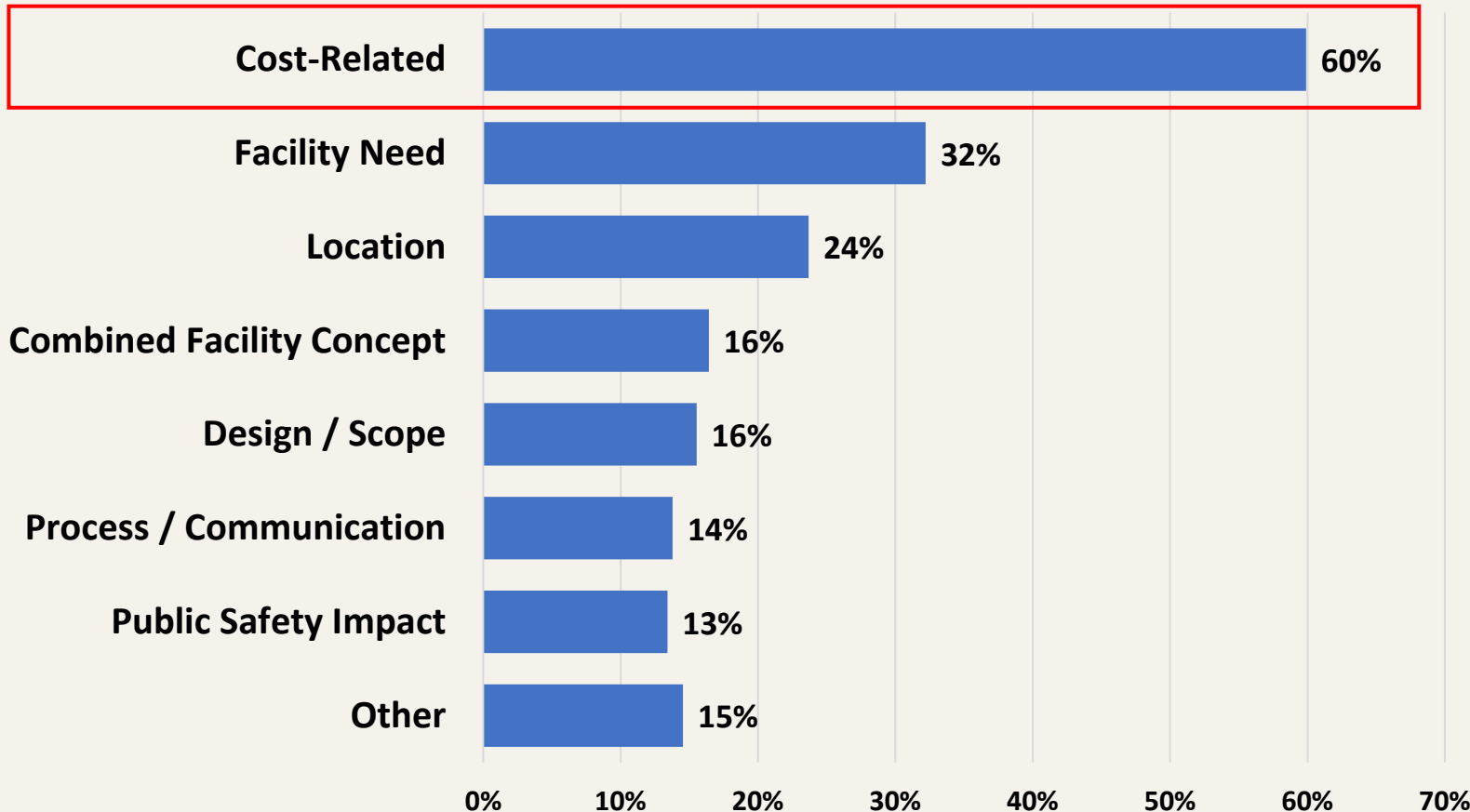


Q6. If a referendum were held today on a combined Public Safety Facility in Ridgefield, how would you vote?
 Q9. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each statement - % Agree Completely/Somewhat

What Residents Said in Open-Ended Verbatim Comments

Q8 — Please briefly explain the main reason(s) for your position regarding a combined Police and Fire Emergency Services Command Center.
(Multiple themes coded; n = 798 registered voters)

Total Sample

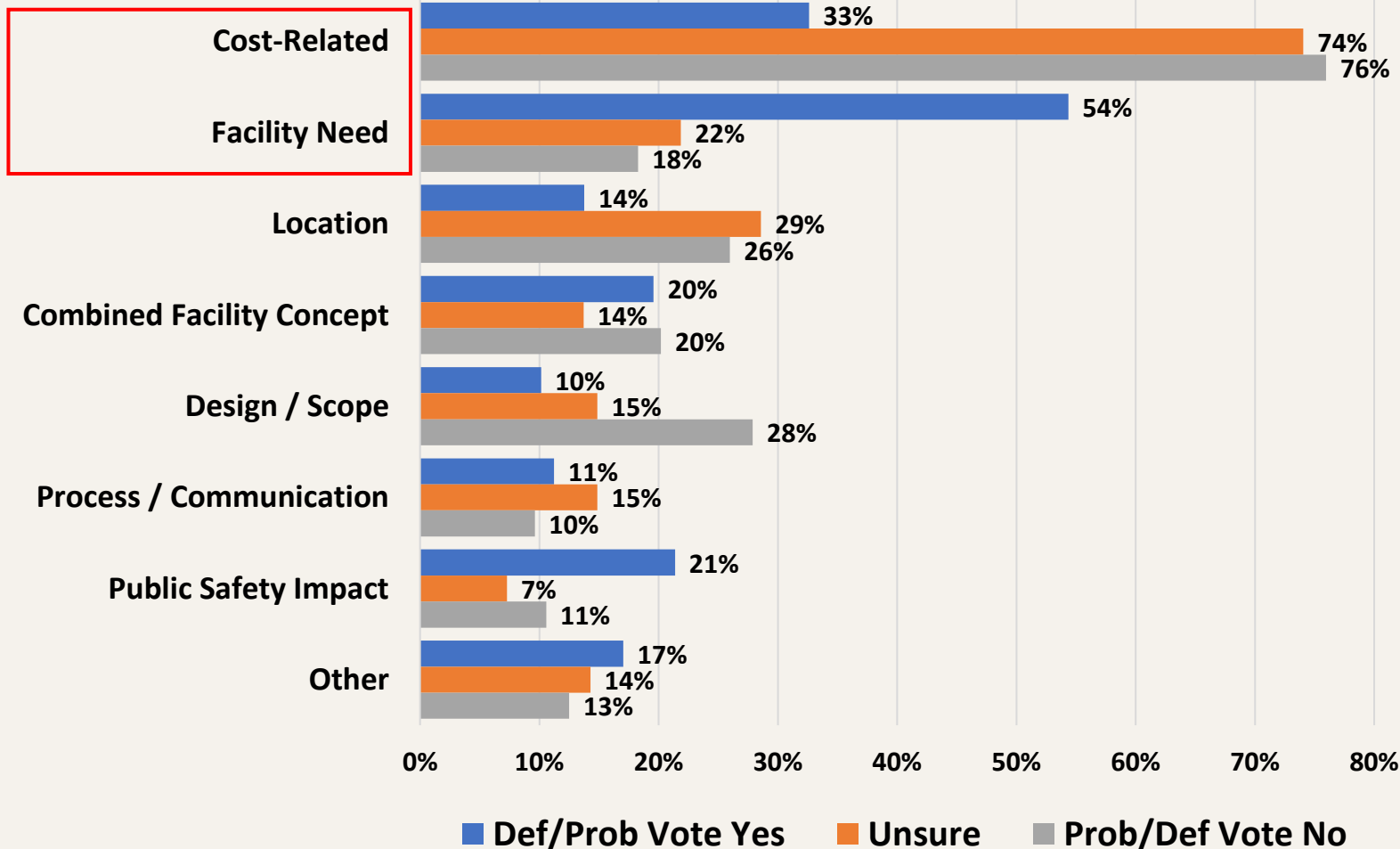


STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

- **Cost is the barrier, full stop.** Cited by 60% of all respondents and 74% of opponents, cost-related concerns dwarf every other theme.
- **Facility need is the one thing everyone agrees on.** With 82% acknowledging that current facilities are outdated and 32% volunteering facility need unprompted, this is the uncontested common ground.
- **Location remains an open wound.** Cited by 24% overall and 29% of opponents, site-related concerns did not resolve themselves after the November defeat.
- **Poor communication left votes on the table.** Fourteen percent of respondents flagged transparency and process failures.
- **The safety argument appears under-deployed** with no meaningful mentions here.

What Residents Said in Open-Ended Verbatim Comments

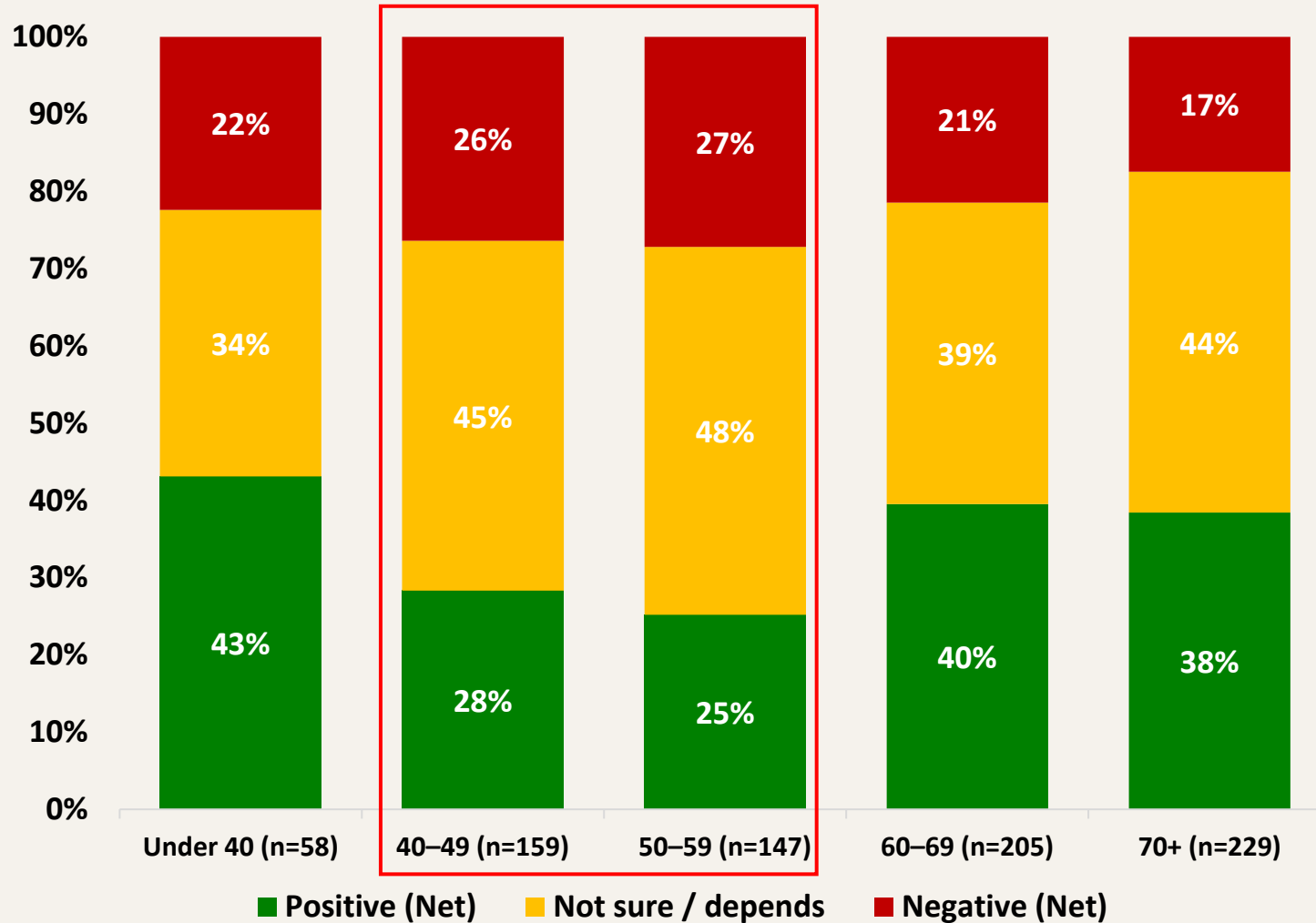
Q8 — Please briefly explain the main reason(s) for your position regarding a combined Police and Fire Emergency Services Command Center.
(Multiple themes coded; n = 798 registered voters)



STRATEGIC INSIGHTS

- **Facility need resonates with supporters but has limited reach beyond the base.** The 54% citation rate among Yes voters drops to 18% among opponents and 22% among the undecided.
- **Cost concerns are nearly identical among No voters and the undecided.** At 76% and 74% respectively, much of the undecided segment shares the opposition's primary objection.
- **Public safety impact is significantly undercited.** Only 21% of Yes voters and 7% of undecided voters volunteer safety outcomes — a notable gap given that this registers in the decision factors battery.
- **Design and scope concerns run deeper among opponents.** No voters cite this theme at 28% versus 10% among supporters, pointing to project scale as a secondary driver of resistance.
- **Undecided voters and No voters share similar concern profiles.** Tracking closely on cost (74% vs. 76%) and location (29% vs. 26%), converting the undecideds will require addressing financial and site concerns directly.

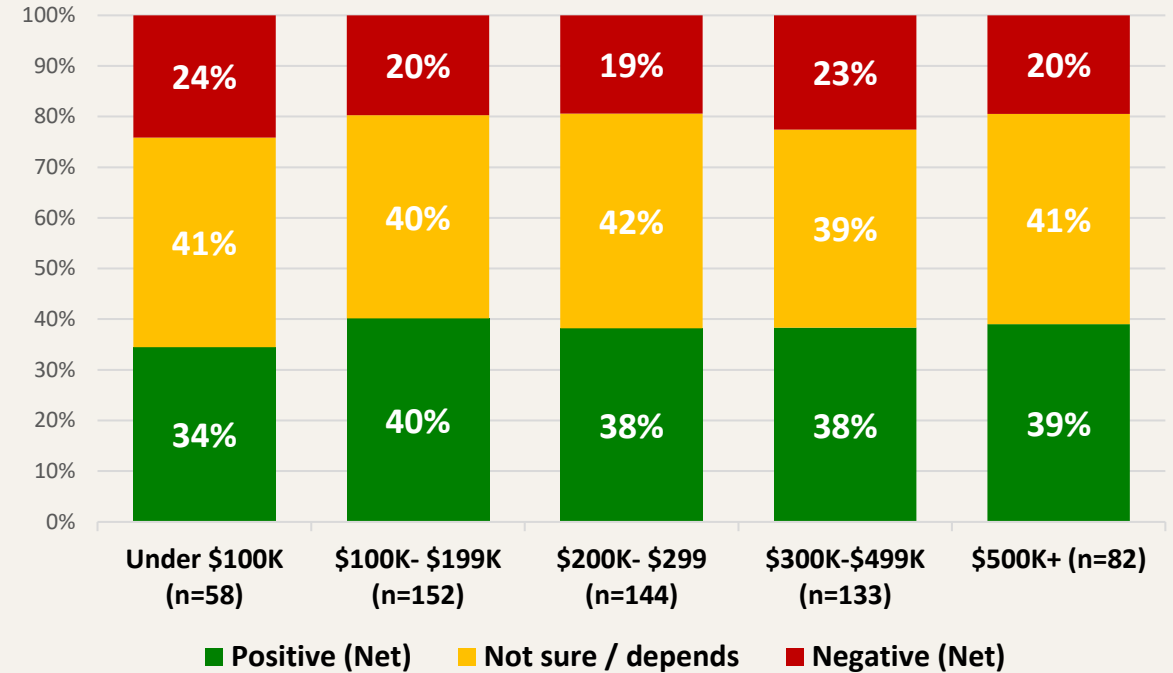
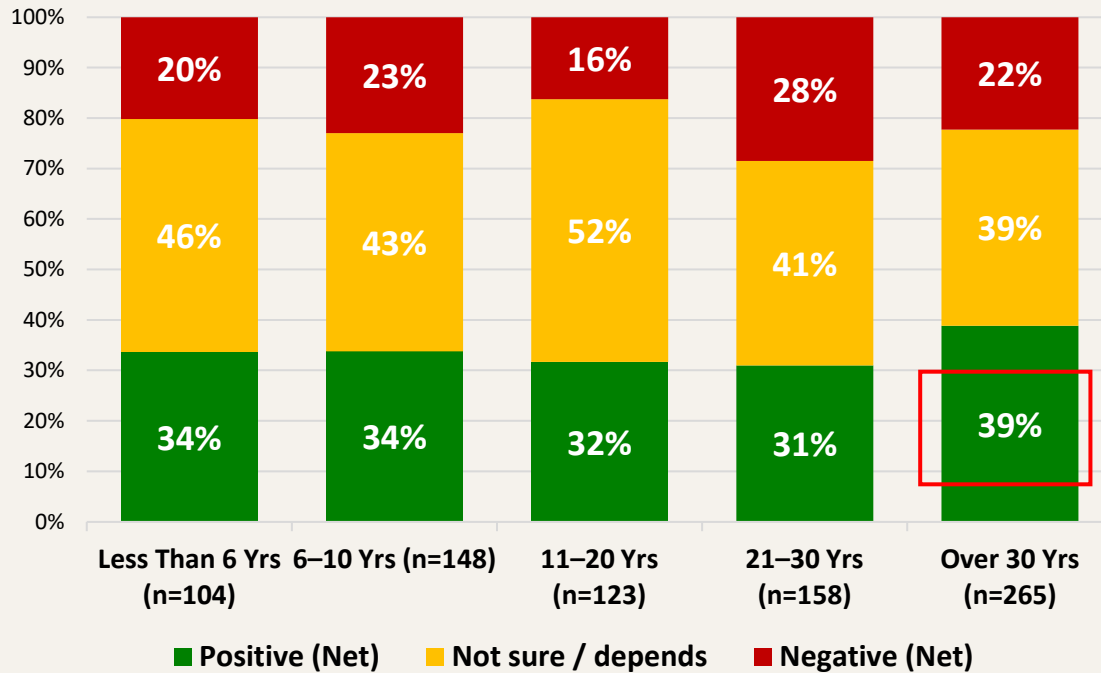
How Opinion Varies Across Generations



AGE COHORT PROFILE

- The 40–59 age cohorts represent the greatest persuasion challenge — they combine the lowest definite Yes support (25%–28%) with the largest undecided shares (45–48%).
- Voters under 40 and 60+ show comparatively stronger positive leanings, making the middle-aged segment both the biggest opportunity and the hardest to move.

Years As Resident & Income



TENURE INSIGHT:

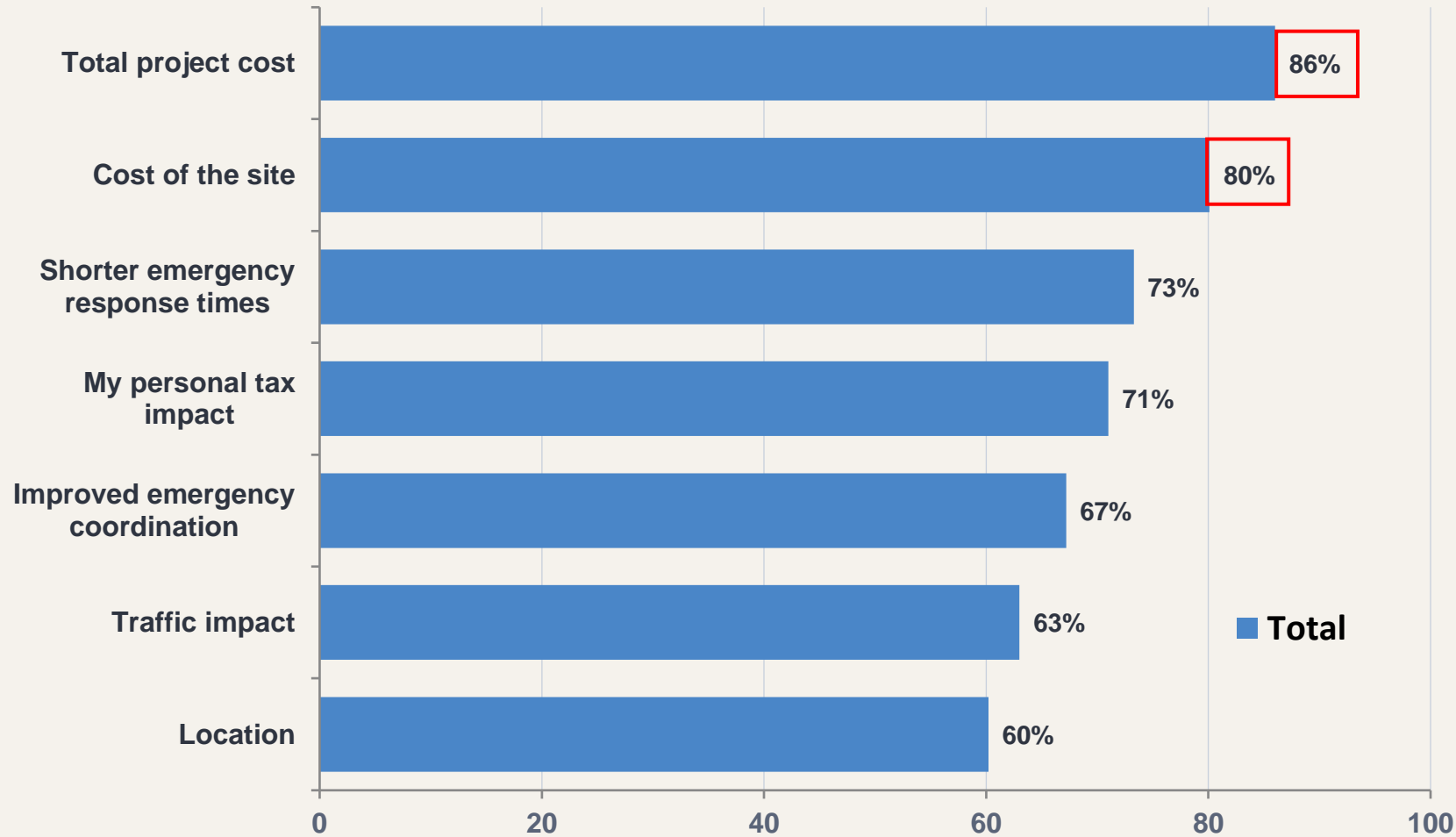
Residential tenure shows little differentiation. Positive sentiment holds flat in the low-to-mid 30s across all tenure groups — with the notable exception of longest-tenured residents (30+ years), who show the highest support (39%), suggesting that deep community roots correlate modestly with greater resolve on the issue.

INCOME INSIGHT:

Unlike the age and tenure subgroups, household income shows virtually no gradient in support, with positive sentiment ranging narrowly from 34% to 40% across all five income tiers, suggesting that cost concerns and project skepticism are broadly distributed across the economic spectrum.

Voter Priorities When Deciding on a Future Referendum

% Extremely / Very Important (n = 798 total; 'Def Yes' and 'Prob/Def No' shown for contrast)



Q10. When thinking about your vote on a future referendum, how important would each of the following factors be when making your decision? - % Extremely/Very Important

KEY TAKEAWAYS – TOTAL SAMPLE

\$ Cost is the controlling issue. Total project cost (86%), site cost (80%), and personal tax impact (71%) rank as the three most important decision factors.

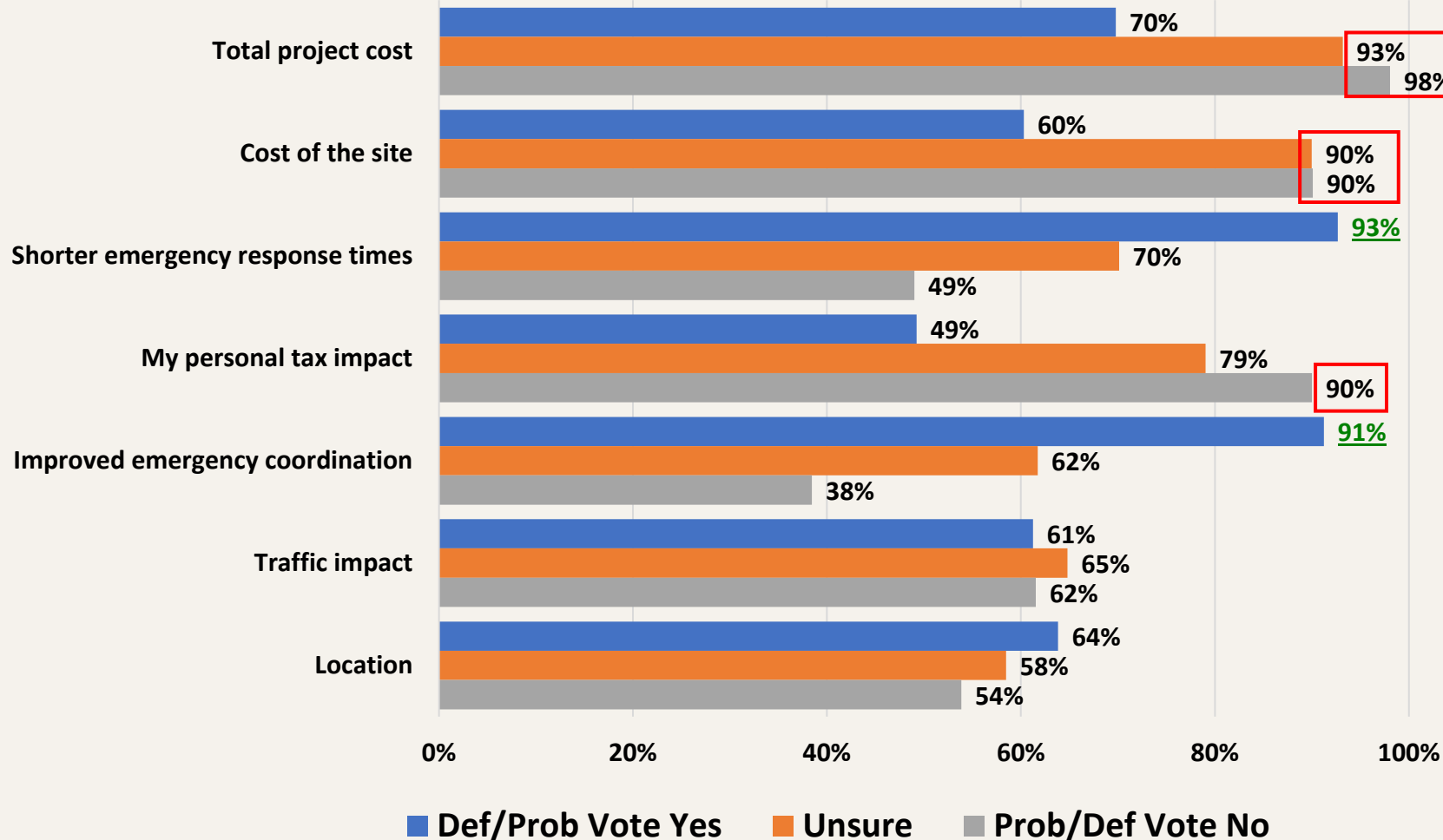
⚠ Safety outcomes are the emotional engine. Shorter emergency response times (73%) and improved coordination (67%) resonate deeply, particularly among likely Yes voters.

📌 Location and traffic are threshold concerns. Neither factor drives votes on their own, but unresolved anxiety about either one creates a reason to vote No.

📣 Public safety outcomes are a key part of the story. Public safety outcomes builds the emotional case, establishes credibility with specific and transparent cost figures, then close by addressing site-related concerns head-on.

Voter Priorities When Deciding on a Future Referendum

% Extremely / Very Important (n = 798 total)



KEY TAKEAWAYS — BY VOTING INTENT

- **Cost is a universal concern.** “No” voters rate total project cost (98%) and site cost (90%) as near-universal concerns. Even among the “Unsure”, cost anxiety runs high at 93% and 90% — making financial transparency key.
- **Safety outcomes motivate the “Yes” coalition.** “Definite/Probable Yes” voters prioritize shorter response times (93%) and improved coordination (91%) at rates far exceeding “No” voters (49% and 38%), confirming that public safety impact are core values of the pro-referendum base.
- **The “Unsure” are cost-sensitive, not safety-skeptical.** Unsure voters rate personal tax impact at 79% — well above their ratings for safety outcomes — signaling they need cost clarity before they can commit.
- **Location and traffic cut across all three groups.** All three groups rate location and traffic within a narrow band (54–65%), making these secondary considerations.

Q10. When thinking about your vote on a future referendum, how important would each of the following factors be when making your decision? - % Extremely/Very Important

What the Data Suggests

1 The shared premise is the starting point

82% of residents agree current facilities are outdated — the only position that crosses every voter segment. The data suggests this common ground is where any future conversation with voters should begin.

2 Cost communication will be the determining factor

Cost is cited by 60% overall and 74% of opponents. The data suggests that general references to project cost are less effective than specific figures — total bond amount, annual household tax impact, and the long-term cost of inaction.

3 Location concerns remain unresolved

24% of residents cite location as a factor. The data suggests that site selection rationale, traffic considerations, and construction details warrant more direct communication.

What the Data Suggests (Continued)

4 Undecided voters respond to outcomes

The 43% undecided segment rates shorter response times and improved coordination as important at 73% and 67% respectively. The data suggests this group is more receptive to performance outcomes than to the facility concept itself.

5 Process concerns represent a credibility gap

14% cited poor communication or lack of transparency (open-endedly). The data suggests that visible corrective steps — independent validation, resident input, feedback mechanisms — could meaningfully reduce this resistance before the next vote.

6 Peer outreach may reach audiences official messaging cannot

Long-tenured residents (30+ years) show the highest support of any tenure group. The data suggests structured peer engagement could be more effective than broadcast communication in reaching the undecided 40–59 cohort.